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Correction: Foundation Grants to Women's Groups

The Feminist Press

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LETTER TO THE EDITORS

I just read your report on education in Minnesota in the *Women's Studies Newsletter* (Winter 1974). I'm pleased that you gave some coverage to Minnesota, which, from my current geographical vantage point, seems like a progressive paradise. However, the emphasis in your paragraph on the State Board of Education is somewhat misleading.

You mention the State Department of Education's certification requirement and then add that "groups like the feminist Emma Willard Task Force" have been used to teach the sexism component. Actually, there would be no such certification requirement without the Emma Willard Task Force. I am one of the founders of the Task Force and I worked with it nearly full-time for the first year (Spring 1971 to Fall 1972). Most of our energy that year was expended in convincing the State Department and school administrators that sexism was a serious problem which they should deal with in their official capacities. It was no easy task. We learned some valuable political lessons about evasion, buck-passing, tokenism, divide-and-conquer, and co-optation. For that first year the State Department was content to let us carry the burden of proof. They graciously invited us to participate in teacher workshops—competing for listeners, of course, with the ethnic minorities—so that we could tell a few teachers and teacher-trainers at a time about the deleterious effects of sexism in education. But the Department avoided any official pronouncements about sexism as long as they could. Without the cautious vigilance of the Emma Willard Task Force, the certification requirement would still be as meaningless as the unimplemented guidelines in the statement of policy issued by the State Board.

Some of the other advances you mention are also attributable to the Emma Willard Task Force. Much of the work in the Minnesota Federation of Teachers has been done by Ann Saxenmeyer, one of the founders of the Task Force, and Anne Schmid, who has consulted with us. Many of the teachers and parents who are now organizing were brought together with the assistance of the Emma Willard Task Force, which keeps a file of people who attend sexism workshops and buy copies of *Sexism in Education*.

I am telling you this not to claim credit for myself and my sisters, but because I am concerned about the women's movement's frequent reliance on the uncontrolled momentum generated by public discussion of social issues. The education officials in Minnesota became "enlightened" not because of humanistic trends in public opinion, but because independently organized feminists kept prodding them to make changes.

In sisterhood,
Cheri Register
Coordinator, University of Idaho Women's Center
Consultant, the Emma Willard Task Force on Education

NEW PROGRAMS AND COORDINATORS

Additions to the list of established women's studies programs:
Maryland, U of, College Park 20742—Women's Studies, Virginia
Beauchamp, Coordinator.

Western Washington S C, Bellingham 98225—Women's Studies,
Meredith Cary, Coord.: Program offers a minor.

New coordinators:
Laney C, Oakland Calif. 94607—Laura Stenson, Chairperson.
Pennsylvania, U of, Philadelphia 19104—Else Greene, Coordinator.

SCHOOLS: NEWS AND RESOURCES

Another U. S. Congressperson, Senator Charles C. Percy, has introduced legislation to promote equal educational opportunities for women. The Women's Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974, like the Women's Educational Equity Act introduced by Representative Patsy Mink and Senator Walter Mondale, "is an attempt to call a halt to the processes that have robbed women of their potential. . . ." Senator Percy contends that landmark laws such as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 are alone not enough to ensure equal educational opportunity for women. While the Mink and Mondale bill will "create a new program to support a wide range of projects and activities designed to eliminate sex discrimination in education, the Women's Equal Educational Opportunity Act would amend existing law, including provisions under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act and the Vocational Education Act, to ensure that Federal support for education is used to remedy the effects of past discrimination. . . ."

The major points of Senator Percy's bill specifically designate that Title II funding for library materials be used for the purchase of non-sexist library materials; and that no less than 15 per cent of funds granted in any fiscal year from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act be used to meet the special education needs of women; and that State money from Federal education grants be used to train teachers and other personnel to avoid sex bias, to increase the proportion of women serving as school administrators, to train both sexes in vocational programs and to develop and disseminate non-sexist vocational education materials in order to increase awareness of the changing role of women in the world of work. ■

Since elementary social studies materials still omit and seriously distort information about women's lives, elementary school teachers should know the recently published *Women Themselves* by Johanna Johnston and illustrated by Deanne Hollinger (Dodd, Mead: 1973, hardcover, \$4.50), a 126-page book for young readers about the lives of fourteen women (Anne Hutchinson, Anne Bradstreet, Lady Deborah Moody, Phillis Wheatley, Abigail Adams, Emma Willard, Ernestine Rose, Elizabeth Blackwell, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Clara Barton, Victoria Woodhull, Nellie Bly, and Carrie Chapman Catt). Written in conversational verse (in eight to 10 page chapters), the opening poem describes the women included here as "just a few" of

The women
who wanted to speak out
about what they thought,
the women who wanted to use their talents
for something more than cooking and cleaning,
needed a very special determination. ■

While educational publishers continue to create multi-media productions about women for school use, few of these are feminist and of high quality. Schloat Productions has just completed three that counter this trend: *A Woman's Place*; a companion piece entitled *Masculinity*; and *Women's Work—America 1620-1920*. All include teachers' guides. We hope the guide for *Women's Work* is indicative of the others to come: in addition to the slide narration, it includes participatory discussion questions and activities which encourage student involvement in the history of women's work, not only in the past but also in the present. Write for price list to Schloat Productions, Prentice Hall, 150 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York 10591. ■

CORRECTION: in the article "Foundation Grants to Women's Groups," appearing in our Fall 1973 issue, an incorrect figure was cited as awarded to the Jackson Women's Coalition of Jackson, Mississippi by the New York Foundation. The correct figure is \$2500.00